

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine
December 21, 2022

President Biden. Well, Mr. President, it's good to have you back. I'm delighted you were able to make the trip to be here. And you know, it's an honor to be by your side in united defense against what is a brutal, brutal war being waged by Putin.

Three hundred days. Hard to believe. Three hundred days——

President Zelenskyy. Yes.

President Biden. ——you've been going through this. And Putin has waged a brutal assault on the Ukraine's right to exist as a nation, and the attack on innocent Ukrainian people for no reason other than to intimidate.

And he's escalated his assault on civilians after hitting schools, orphanages, hospitals, landmarks. It just—it's—and he's trying to use winter as a weapon.

And—but the Ukrainian people continue to inspire the world. I mean that sincerely. Not just inspire us, but inspire the world with their courage and how they have chose the resilience and resolve for their future.

And the American people have stood proudly with them, Democrats and Republicans—together with our allies in Europe and Japan and other places—to make sure you have the financial, humanitarian, and security assistance that is needed. And we're going to talk about that today.

And we're going to continue to strengthen Ukraine's ability to defend itself, particularly air defense. And that's why we're going to be providing Ukraine with a Patriot missile battery and training your forces to be able to accurately use it.

Together with our partners, we're also going to continue to impose costs on the Kremlin, and we'll support Ukraine pursuing a just peace.

President Zelenskyy, the United States stands with the brave people of Ukraine, and we stand with you. And you've been a great leader.

And by the way, we have a famous thing that occurs once a year. We pick the "Man of the Year" in TIME magazine. You are the "Man of the Year" in this—in the United States of America.

And so, welcome. We have a lot to talk about. And the floor is yours, sir.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much. Mr. President, a great honor for me to be here. Your journalists. Thank you so much for the invitation. I really wanted to come earlier. Mr. President knows about it, but I couldn't do it because the situation was so difficult. And now, if I've come—I came—in that we controlled the situation and because of support—and, first of all, because of your support.

And I really—I understand that we have very important topics, and we'll discuss them—everything—so many challenges in Ukraine, in Europe, in the world, and from energy to the situation on battlefield.

But I—first of all, I really—all my appreciations from my heart, from the hearts of Ukrainians—all Ukrainians, from our nation—strong nation. All the appreciations to you, first of

all, Mr. President, for your big support and leadership. Of course, Europe—many countries—helped us and are helping now because the war is not over. It's a bit—but anyway.

But that is your leadership. Thank you, first of all.

President Biden. Thank you.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

Of course, thanks bipartisan support. Thanks, Congress. And thanks from our just ordinary people to your ordinary people, Americans. I really appreciate. I think it's very difficult to understand what does it mean when we say appreciate, but you really have to feel it. And thank you so much. Great honor to be here.

And yesterday I was on Donbas, in Bakhmut. That is the place on the east of our country. You know it, all the details. We had so many phone calls and spoke detail about it.

And I want to give you something. One guy, he's really a real hero, a real captain. And he asked me to pass his award, and he asked me to pass his award to President Biden. You will understand he is a captain of HIMARS battery.

[At this point, President Biden pumped his fist.]

Yes, he's very brave. And he said give it to a very brave President. And I want to give you that and the Cross for Military Merit. That is one.

President Biden. Well, God love you.

[President Zelenskyy presented President Biden with a Ukrainian Cross for Military Merit.]

President Zelenskyy. Yes, that is from him. And I have the list. He wrote a list. Yes. I didn't read, Mr. President. I can't read; it's not mine. It's in Ukrainian language, but here that translation. It's from him.

[President Zelenskyy presented a document to President Biden.]

President Biden. Thank you. And his name is—I have his name?

President Zelenskyy. Yes. Yes.

President Biden. I can contact him?

President Zelenskyy. Yes.

President Biden. Pavlo.

President Zelenskyy. Pavlo.

President Biden. Pavlo.

President Zelenskyy. Pavlo, *tak*.

President Biden. Well, undeserved, but much appreciated. Thank you.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you. Thank you.

President Biden. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I will——

President Zelenskyy. He said that all—many, many his brothers this system saved. So thank you very much.

President Biden. Well, we have a tradition here, and I will give it to him. My son who fought in Iraq, they have what they call a "command coin." You've seen those coins——

President Zelenskyy. Yes. Yes.

President Biden. —we give on the battlefield? I will make sure that he gets one of those.

President Zelenskyy. Great. Give me; I will give.

President Biden. Well, thank you, thank you, thank you.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much.

President Biden. I appreciate it. What a great honor.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you.

President Biden. A great honor.

Well, thank you, press. Appreciate it very much.

[Several reporters and staffers began speaking at once.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:17 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. President Zelenskyy referred to the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS).

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Ukraine, President Zelenskyy.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, international and U.S. sanctions; Russia, President; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance.

DCPD Number: DCPD202201135.